PRAYERS FOR A LEGISLATURE.

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PRAYERS

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OFFERED IN THE

MASSACHUSETTS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

During the Session of 1868,

BY THE CHAPLAIN,

WILLIAM R. ALGER.

7

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1868.

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PREFACE.

THE occasion of the publication of the following Prayers will appear from the subjoined correspondence: —

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 12, 1868.

"REV. WILLIAM R. ALGER, CHAPLAIN: —

"DEAR SIR: In the remarks made to you by the Speaker of the House when presenting, on behalf of the members, a watch and chain as a token of their regard and esteem, and of their appreciation of your services as Chaplain of the House of Representatives during the session now closing, the members heard with gratification the announcement that the prayers which they had listened to with so much pleasure from day to day had been written out by one of the reporters at the request of the Speaker, and were at the disposal of the members.

"So general a desire was expressed to possess copies of them, that an informal meeting of the members was held, at which the undersigned were selected as a committee to request you to consent to the publication of the prayers thus reported.

"It gives us personally great pleasure to make this request on their behalf, that they may be permitted to have in a permanent form what was so interesting from day to day, and is now so agreeably remembered.

"We are your friends and obedient servants,

"NEWELL A. THOMPSON,
DEXTER S. KING,
JOSEPH S. POTTER,
NOAH M. GAYLORD,
WILLIAM HOWLAND,
} Committee of members of the House of Representatives.
JOHN MORRISSEY, *Sergeant-at-Arms.*"

BOSTON, June 14, 1868.

"RESPECTED SIRS: —

"In deference to your wish, I willingly waive all scruples, and yield to the printing of the prayers which it has been my duty and privilege to offer within your hearing during the legislative session just ended. A Greek philosopher once defined prayer as 'a flight of the alone to the Alone,' — a solitary interview of the finite spirit with the Infinite Spirit. That is certainly one element in all true prayer; yet other elements also belong to prayers in which the worshipper represents not merely himself, but likewise the body of men in whose presence and behalf, as well as his own, he worships.

"If such a desire be not too presumptuous, may the prayers herewith submitted to print win the same favorable attention through your eyes which they originally won through your ears. On you, gentlemen, and on those you represent, may every blessing descend. So prays he who, honored in being your servant for a season, will deem himself happy in being your friend while life lasts.

"WILLIAM R. ALGER.

"HON. NEWELL A. THOMPSON, and others, Committee."

The proceedings referred to in the foregoing correspondence took place on the morning of Wednesday, June 10.

After the opening of the House by prayer, on motion of Mr. King of Boston, the House took a recess of fifteen minutes.

The Speaker of the House, Hon. Harvey Jewell, then said: —

"The members of the House, who have with so much interest and pleasure listened to the devotional exercises of their Chaplain during the session now about to close, have desired to ex-

press their feelings toward him by some substantial token, and have procured a watch and chain which they have placed in my hands, desiring me to present them to him on their behalf, and this recess is now taken for that purpose."

The Speaker, then addressing Mr. Alger, spoke as follows: —

"SIR: — The official position which I occupy in the House of Representatives has made the members ask me to perform a service on their behalf, the execution of which is no less agreeable to me than the inception and completion of it has been to them. Sir, your friends among the members of the House, — I do them and you wrong, — your friends *the* members of the House, have been desirous of expressing to you in some substantial and tangible manner their high respect for your person and character, and their complete and thorough appreciation of the manner in which you have discharged the duty of Chaplain during the present session. They therefore have caused to be procured, and ask your acceptance of, this watch and chain as a faint token of their friendship for you and their respect for your office.

"You were at the time of your election personally unknown to most of the members of this House. Of course, sir, their choice was not then the result of personal regard or considerations of personal friendship, but was the legitimate and proper consequence of your public reputation, both as a clergyman and as a scholar. Our ancestors wisely introduced the usage of selecting a Chaplain for each of the two Houses of the legislature, and from the earliest to the present time, each day's session of either branch has been commenced with prayers to Almighty God. It is not wonderful if, in the lapse of time, and in the variety of persons who from year to year are called to fill these places and conduct these services, there should have been those who performed them in a manner so monotonous or in a style so objectionable and in some instances so offensive, that these religious services have at times failed of what ought to be their

proper effect, and the attendance of members at the opening hour has sometimes been small, and their manner, if not undevout, inattentive. But, sir, such has not been the case during the present session. From the first day to the last the hour of daily prayer has found a large proportion of the members in their places, and no religious assembly was ever more silent or attentive than has been this body during all your religious services here. Almost daily, from the first day of the session, I have heard from members expressions of pleasure, often of delight, as they referred to these devotional exercises. I suppose, sir, no one who has not had the trial knows how hard is the task to clothe the language of supplication in such new garb, from day to day, as to awaken new interest in the listeners and avoid that monotony which tires and palls upon the hearer. So difficult is it, that the Catholic Church and one great branch of the Protestant Church preferred to set forth forms of supplication adapted to each of the great wants of mortality, and *extempore* prayer is thus replaced by those enduring forms which, though less effective aids to devotion in particular instances, always express the wants of our common nature and turn our thoughts to the great Source of all things.

"How hard is the labor of the Chaplain of this House, to utter in few and brief words that will not weary, and yet in ever-varying and changing phrase, those simple thoughts that express our dependence upon the Divine Creator of all things, in whom 'we live and move and have our being,' and our daily need of his support and guidance. That you have been able to make this exercise a pleasure to the members of the House, their unanimous verdict is a sufficient testimonial. So much was I myself struck at the beginning of the session by your felicity in these respects, that I procured one of the reporters in attendance on the House to make reports of these devotional exercises for myself, and I have them now fairly written out for the examination of any person who may desire to peruse them.

"Sir, again on behalf of the members of the House of Repre-

sentatives I return you their thanks and my own for the most acceptable manner in which you have discharged the duties of your office. I beg you, in their name, to accept this token of their respect, esteem, and affection, with the hope that as day by day it indicates to you the passage of time, it may also recall not unpleasant memories of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts of the year 1868."

The Chaplain responded: —

"Dear Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen Representatives, my Friends: The amount of business demanding your attention would make any prolonged remarks from me impertinent at this time, and I shall suppress much it would give me pleasure to utter. It has been remarked by a cynical author, that with a plentiful supply of four metals any man can go easily through the world, — silver in the tongue, gold in the pocket, brass in the face, and iron in the heart. Now, although your encouraging appreciation will perhaps add a little silver to my tongue, and this watch will certainly cause me to have more gold in my pocket, I trust a true modesty will keep all additional brass from my cheek, and I am sure that there will be even less iron than before in my heart, owing to the new emotions of gratitude and good-will planted there by your kindness. Gentlemen, allow me to deprecate your excessive praise by returning the share due to your own generosity; for if my words of prayer have proved impressive, it is due at least as much to your sensibility as to my merit. Prayers belong to a province scarcely amenable to common criticism, and one which should be wholly free from vanity or other form of personal obtrusion. I will therefore only say that I have deemed it a duty to avoid, in these exercises, by earnest sincerity of thought and feeling, all merely conventional phrases and mechanical repetitions, and never to allow them to become the vehicles of political opinions or partisan prejudices.

"Charles the First gave Jeremy Taylor a watch bearing the

Scriptural motto, *Nescitis horam*, — 'Ye know not the hour.' The hapless king soon ascended the scaffold; the good bishop not long after climbed the heaven. And where are giver and recipient now? But the gift still remains (as this kind one of yours will when all of us have gone to dust), preaching its mysterious moral to every eye that sees it, tacitly suggesting the solemn words of the Master, 'Watch! and what I say unto you I say unto all, watch.'

"Your approbation, gentlemen, and this rich token of your favor, I shall value to the latest day of my life. I thank you all from the very bottom of my heart. May you and I keep such good time that eternity shall bring us no regret.

"And now, Mr. Speaker, to you personally how can I express the esteem, the friendship, the high hopes which, in common with all the members of the House, I cherish for you? I gladly and gratefully join the great crowd of your friends in congratulating you on the possession of a nature so finely fitting the name you wear. As we have met here from day to day through the series of dark and cloudy weeks which have signalized the past season, your frank and affectionate greeting, never once failing me, has been an invariable sunbeam of the heart. My heart rushes into my tongue and my eyes, as I devoutly say, God bless you! May your future career be as honorable as your past! Not for yourself merely do I wish it, but for your country; for the State flourishes when such men climb. I believe all here will join me in saying to our good old mother, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the words of Shakespeare: —

> 'We must entreat you, honor us so much
> As to advance this JEWEL; accept it and wear it.'"

PRAYERS

FOR

A LEGISLATURE.

I.

AS we meet, O Lord, in this hall of legislation, we would first unitedly turn our thoughts unto Thee in prayer. Glory and praise be unto Thee forever. We live on thy bounty, and we trust in thy mercy. O that in everything we may always humbly surrender ourselves to thy guidance! May all that we do be acceptable in thy sight, and increase that public welfare of which we are called to be the guardians and the servants. We ask it in the name of the great exemplar and teacher of the world.

II.

O THOU Almighty Sovereign, from whom every blessing proceeds, we would reverently take thy name on our lips and hallow it in our hearts. We beseech Thee to give us wisdom, purity, and earnestness for the faithful discharge of all our duties. We pray to Thee for the overthrow and removal of every evil from among our people, and for the increase and perfection of every good institution and custom. As thy blessing was with our fathers, so may it be with us and our children forever. And all the praise and glory shall be thine alone.

III.

O LORD God of heaven and earth, inexhaustible fountain of wisdom and mercy, unto whom men and nations should ever look for guidance, we implore Thee to accept our homage, to forgive our transgressions, and so to inspire our hearts and minds that all our duties may be becomingly fulfilled. We pray that the spirit of justice and brotherly love may prevail throughout our land, and bring forth its fruits in perfection. We beseech Thee to command thy benediction to rest on all our country in its national and domestic interests. And unto Thee alone shall be ascribed the honor and the thanks for ever and ever.

IV.

INFINITE Majesty, before whom all beings should bow in mingled love and awe, once more we bring our humble tribute of adoration. O condescend to accept our offering and to smile on thy votaries. Withhold not thy Spirit from any one of us, but let it lead us in the ways of truth and virtue. Let it make us gracious to one another, and pleasing to Thee. We invoke thy favor on these representatives and lawgivers of the people. May our State, our Nation, be carried forward in the paths of excellence and happiness, until it shall be a model for the whole earth.

V.

WE bow in adoration at the thought of Thee, O thou Infinite God, Creator of heaven and earth, and Father of souls. As we come up here to fill our several offices, we would put far away from us all unrighteousness, pride, and self-will. O let thy Spirit give us wisdom, and make us holy and pure. Wilt Thou preside in our councils, rule in our rulers, and make our people a happy people, all whose laws shall be justice and love. We ask it for the sake of the mercy certified to us in the Saviour.

VI.

ALMIGHTY Sovereign, Supreme Judge of men and angels, to thine august name we bring the tribute of our deepest homage. Sensible of our unworthiness and of our ignorance, we look to Thee for pardon and for knowledge. From our weakness and our temptations we cry to Thee for light and deliverance. We would fain conform our doings to thy laws. O, in our private characters and lives, in our public stations and duties, may thine aid be our sufficiency evermore. And all the praise shall be thine.

VII.

INCONCEIVABLE Creator and Ruler of the universe, we lift our souls to Thee in praise and prayer. Glory be to Thee from all thy works. Submission, obedience, and thanks be to Thee from all thy creatures. May thy will be throned in our wills. May thy love purify and hallow our affections; so that, whatever we do, our action may be wholesome and benignant for the society in which we live, and for the country to which we belong. We implore Thee graciously to answer our prayer for thy mercy's sake.

VIII.

HEAVENLY Father and Governor of men and nations, who decreest justice for the whole earth, we worship Thee for thy perfections in Thyself, and we thank Thee for thy mercies unto us. We pray that thy pure Spirit may breathe through us all, animating our desires and sanctifying our deeds. Command thy blessing to rest on every good institution or influence in our country, and let thy love overrule and subdue unto itself every evil thing among us, that our people may be saved from sin and misery, and thy name be glorified.

IX.

AUTHOR of light and good, whose mercies are over all the works of thy hands, again, with fresh vows of allegiance and love, we turn to Thee. Our ways are all bare to thine inspection; may they ever be such as shall win thine approval. We would bring to the fulfilment of our public offices a spirit of patient carefulness and magnanimity. Wilt Thou watch over our deliberations, and lead them to good results alone. For the sake of our need and of thy mercy we implore it.

X.

AUTHOR of nature and Supreme Ruler of men, possessing every perfection in Thyself Thou needest nothing from us. But Thou art pleased when thy children sincerely worship Thee. And when they bring to thine altar pure desires, and faithful efforts to obey Thee, and to love and serve one another and their country, Thou wilt never reject their offerings. In behalf of these thy servants, on whom important responsibilities are laid, we supplicate the presence and aid of thy Spirit. O kindly listen to our prayer, and accept the homage we ascribe to thy name.

XI.

SOVEREIGN Friend and Ruler of men, humbly we offer Thee our thanks for all thy favors, and implore thy grace to keep us from sin, and to guide us to the fulfilment of every duty. We bless the providence which has given us faculties so exalted, homes so pleasant, friends so dear, a country so great and free, and such eternal hopes anchored behind the veil. May we be true to the obligations imposed by such unmerited and inspiring privileges. Lift from us the shadow of every public wrong, and purge us from the poison of every private vice. Our fellows may depart, objects around may deceive, even the desires within may fail; but O be Thou our sufficing Companion, whatever fortunes betide us, in whatever worlds we wander.

XII.

IN spirit we kneel to adore Thee, O thou Infinite Spirit! Grant us the reverential mind and the pure heart, that we may acceptably adore Thee. Withhold not thine inspiration from us, but let it guide us to wisdom and duty in all things. Thanking Thee, O God, for the extreme richness of our blessings in this free and favored land, we pray that all our people, from the highest to the lowest, may be faithful to their political and moral obligations. And as thine is the power, so shall the glory be thine.

XIII.

ALMIGHTY God and Father, we devoutly recognize and confess thy supreme claims for our reverence, our obedience, and our grateful love. Wholly dependent on Thee for all that we hope as well as for all that we are, what less acknowledgment can we offer than a humble and earnest conformity to thy commands? We pray for the aid of thy Spirit, that we may render this service in all the relationships of our lives, private and public. Be pleased to answer our prayer, and to accept the worship we pay Thee.

XIV.

GOD, of whose infinite perfections the material universe is but a faint gleam, we are filled with wonder, love, and awe when we meditate upon Thee. Thy ways are a great deep: how can we ever understand Thee! Ah, it is not needful that we should understand, but only that we should worship and obey, Thee. We humbly confess our sin, our folly, our weakness; and we look to Thee alone for pardon and deliverance. O grant us thy Spirit, and we will ascribe endless praise to thy name.

XV.

IMMORTAL honors be to thy name, Almighty God. Day and night, sunshine and snow, seed-time and harvest, bear witness to thy power and wisdom. And when we reflect on the innumerable blessings with which Thou hast strewed our lives, and the signal privileges which distinguish us as a people, we cannot avoid feeling that Thou art good indeed. May the lives we lead, the laws we pass, the institutions we sustain, correspond with the providential favors we enjoy. Lead us not into temptation, Lord, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

XVI.

GOD of the universe and Parent of mankind, Thou hast established a perfect order in thy works, and Thou requirest thy creatures ever to observe a kindred order in their ways. We confess and mourn the confusions, caused by sin, in the souls of men and in the governments of nations. We lament the discord and misery that prevail below. We long for a clearer perception of thy law, and a closer conformity to it. We pray for the fuller harmony of earthly institutions with heavenly principles. Smile, Father, on our just desires. As thy will is done on high, so cause it to be done in this world, for the redemption of men from evil, and the fulfilment of thy kingdom in righteousness.

XVII.

ALL-RIGHTEOUS and all-merciful Governor of heaven and earth, we would devoutly magnify thy name and praise thy goodness. Tracing the works of thy hands in immensity, or studying the ways of thy Spirit in our souls, we are filled with wonder and gratitude. In the closet would we worship Thee in truth; and in this public place, in the company of the counsellors and before the interests of the State, we would offer a sincere homage at thy throne. O let thy Holy Spirit govern in all that we do, in all that we desire; that not our lips alone, but our conduct also, may praise Thee.

XVIII.

INFINITE Presence, from whom we can never be absent, however often we may forget Thee, we now renewedly own thy sovereignty, and offer Thee our service. Help us acceptably to worship and serve Thee in all our deeds. May our hands ever be clean from bribes, our hearts pure from base desires, our minds free from the clouds of passion and falsehood. Make us co-workers with thy providence for the removal of the vices and sufferings of men. O smile on every province and interest of our beloved country. Make us a united and happy people, zealous of good works, devoted to liberty and virtue, an example to the world. We ask it in the name of Christ.

XIX.

SOURCE of power, Spirit of good, we are often unmindful of Thee amidst the pressure and hurry of material toils and cares; but the first moment of thought overwhelms us with awe, opening on our souls the certainty of thy presence, with all thy solemn attributes. May thy Spirit keep us ever mindful of our duty to be grateful for thy mercies and obedient to thy laws. May our public institutions be conformed to thy will, and our private lives be purified by thy love. O Lord, forgive our sins, correct our errors, and lead us constantly in the straight and pleasant paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake.

XX.

SUPREME Parent and Ruler of all, who givest thy creatures every good gift they enjoy, thanksgiving and honor be to Thee from all forever. We humbly invoke thine aid in the discharge of our duties. Lend us thy light, that we may see the truth; and thy love, that we may find our dearest pleasure in obeying it. Grant thy blessing to every portion of our land. May the attractions of thy will draw the habits of our people and the institutions of our country into such entire harmony with thy purposes, that this nation may become the pride and joy of the whole earth.

XXI.

O GOD, Infinite Spirit who hast made all things by the power of Thy wisdom, and dost govern all things by the laws of thy love, we are the recipients of thy bounty, and we would be the glorifiers of thy name. Dispel our darkness by thy light; cleanse our defilement by thy purity; overcome our iniquities by thy righteousness. In all our counsels and deeds may we seek, in the spirit of the divine Master, the prosperity and honor of our country, the welfare of our fellow-men, and the advancement of thy kingdom throughout the world. And thine alone shall be the glory forevermore.

XXII.

SOLITARY and everlasting Sovereign, beneath whose inspection the generations of men play their brief parts on earth and vanish into eternity, as all bounties and blessings proceed from Thee, so should all honors and praises be paid unto Thee. Day unto day and night unto night declare thy glory, and from age to age thy worship shall sound without end. May we take pattern after the virtues and beneficent achievements of those who have gone before us; and may we take warning from their vices and shame. The good which we have inherited may we diligently seek to transmit, brightened and increased, paying the debt we owe to our ancestry by the blessings we bequeath to our posterity.

In the name of Christ we pray for thy blessing on all classes of men, all nations of the earth, and ascribe to Thee immortal love and homage.

XXIII.

WITH profound humility and veneration, Almighty Lord, we kneel before Thee in spirit. With grateful trust we lift our thoughts to Thee in prayer. O purify us from everything unworthy, and fill us with divine light and love and peace. Smile on this favored land; inspire its rulers and perfect its institutions. Deliver our people from every jealous prejudice or animosity, and blend all their hearts in one spirit of patriotic emulation and moral devotedness. May our palaces be prosperity, our walls be justice, and our gates be praise. For the sake of thine infinite mercy we implore Thee to grant our prayer, and make us all thy sincere servants; that at thy name every knee may bow and every tongue confess thy glory, world without end.

XXIV.

KING of kings and Lord of lords, who canst have no rival nor companion in thy boundless perfections, in the chorus of worship which rolls up before Thee from all worlds, we too would bear a humble part, taking thy name on our lips with awe, and ascribing to Thee eternal majesty and praise. We desire to adore Thee, not with words and forms alone, but also with our thoughts, our affections, and our lives. Be pleased, Almighty Sovereign, to look with favor on our State and Nation. Let thy law be the guide, thy love the inspiration, alike of those who should rule and of those who should obey. May intelligence, virtue, liberty, and gladness spread among all people, and thy will be done over the whole earth as it is done in heaven.

XXV.

AGAIN, O Lord, as we meet in this hall of legislation, we unitedly take thy name on our lips and implore thy blessing on our labors. In all that we here do, may our supreme motive be the honor of thy law and the welfare of our people. Deliver us from every ignoble passion, all partisan animosities, and animate us with a single desire in everything to serve the cause of truth and good. Knowing our own weakness, Heavenly Father, we pray Thee not to lead us into temptation, but to deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

XXVI.

ALMIGHTY and Eternal Majesty of heaven and earth, as we meet once more in this place to take counsel together on the interests of our State, we invoke thy blessing on our consultations. We desire to be ever conscious of thy presence and of our obligations. We pray for thine aid in advancing the true interests of men everywhere. May truth and justice and freedom and happiness prevail, not only in our own country, but in all the world. O save us and all our fellow-men from every form of sin and misery; and be all the honor thine own.

XXVII.

SUPREME Lawgiver of the universe, Parent of all intelligences, Thou art the giver of every good gift, and the object of every pure adoration. Assembling once more for the fulfilment of our public duties, we supplicate the best auspices of thy Spirit on our deliberations. We are grateful to Thee for our lives, with the multitude of accompanying privileges. We are thankful for the example of our fathers. Our hearts melt within us when we think of their hardships, their sacrifices, and the rich blessings purchased for us by their noble fidelity. May we be as faithful in our generation as they were in theirs, and leave for those who shall come after us an untarnished record of character and a priceless heritage of social welfare. And when we shall long have been forgotten in our graves, may this continent, crowded from shore to shore with a united and happy people, under one flag, be the home of impartial liberty, universal education, and moral purity, for ages without end.

XXVIII.

UNIVERSAL Father, who by thy providence watchest over all thy works and suppliest the wants of all creatures, as from day to day we come up into this public place, may we come with reverential minds and pure purposes. May the sentiment of patriotism, the spirit of philanthropy, the love of truth and virtue, glow afresh in our breasts. May we be drawn together in charity and good-will by the attraction of common allegiances. Free us all, O God, from every hateful passion, and help us to serve our country and our Maker with an acceptable service, for thy name's sake.

XXIX.

INSCRUTABLE God, we worship Thee with wondering faith, lost in the immensity of thine attributes. Although thy being is a mystery which we can never fathom, thy commandments are no mysteries, but plain to the simplest mind. Would that we might all be as willing to do our duties as we are able to understand them! To deal justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly before Thee, is the sum of what Thou askest of us. Ah, help us, Father, as Thou seest that we need thy help, to resist temptation and overcome evil with good.

XXX.

AUTHOR of nature and God of grace, embosomed in thy providence, dependent on thy Spirit for every good, we come before Thee with devout acknowledgments of thy sovereignty, confessing our sin and weakness, and imploring thy paternal pardon and guidance. Give us singleness of eye, that we may discern the principles of a sound policy in all things. Free us from every sinister motive that would pervert our deeds from an unalloyed righteousness and good-will. God of our fathers, we beseech thy benedictions on the civic holiday which the dawning morrow will bring to our land. We thank Thee for the life and memory of Washington. May the spiritual presence of his august character, solemnly brooding over our whole nationality, charged with moral power, deeply impress every American heart. May it awe down the selfish passions in the breasts of demagogues, and kindle still higher in the souls of patriots the fires of noble sentiments; thus continuing from heaven that benignant influence on our country which he began while living in the flesh.

XXXI.

LORD of the creation, Supreme Arbiter of events, assembling here once more for our high duties, we first of all turn our thoughts and affections to Thee in humble prayer. Glory be to thy name forever. Grace and peace be from thy Spirit unto our spirits. Impart to us the knowledge of our duty, with the determination to do it. May we have charity for the offences of others, penitential sorrow for our own. While true to our own convictions, may we have respect and forbearance for those of our associates. We pray in behalf of all occupants of high offices of trust and honor in our land. May thy Spirit, and not the spirit of self-will, a disinterested devotion to the welfare of their country, and no meaner passion, animate and guide them. Allay and abate in them those vices which have ever been the ruin of nations; and grant that our country, which ought to be as prosperous and happy as it is great and free, may move serenely forward to the fulfilment of its appropriate destiny.

XXXII.

ANCIENT of Days, Everlasting Sovereign over all, before whom our fathers walked in their generation, and our children must stand in theirs, we ascribe immortal honors and thanks unto Thee. Help us to be grateful for our privileges, mindful of our obligations, and docile to the instructions of thy Spirit. May our rulers be wise and modest; our people orderly, industrious, and pure: Thou Thyself being not only our Lawgiver and Judge, but also our immutable Friend and Saviour. Thus may it come to pass that all the institutions and lives within our borders shall conspire at once to bless us and to praise Thee. We ask it in the name of Christ.

XXXIII.

HEAR us, O God, while we direct our prayer to Thee, and let thy mercy vouchsafe us a gracious answer. Called to this place by the voice of the people, to legislate for the interests of our beloved Commonwealth, we pray that our motives may be pure, that our counsels may be wise, and that our enactments may be just and benignant.

Forgive, O Lord, our errors and sins; and strengthen all the good influences of education, morality, and religion among us. We pray for every State in our Union, and for the great Union itself, that thy providence may defend it, thy law rule it, thy love guide and bless it, till time shall be no more.

XXXIV.

INFINITE Being, without whom nothing else could be, we would bring Thee the worship of grateful and adoring hearts. Thy wisdom and power are the source from which all things proceed; thy law is the authority which holds all things in order; thy tender mercies are strewn through all thy works. In every public and in every private capacity may it be our supreme desire and purpose to obey, honor, and love Thee; which we ask in the name of Christ.

XXXV.

BENIGNANT Author of our being, Supreme Ordainer of justice and goodness, when we think of Thee as Thou art, in all thy perfections, our hearts burn within us in adoration and love. O may the offerings which we bring be acceptable in thy sight. Wilt Thou be pleased to grant to us, and to all men, a fuller measure of thy Spirit. Speedily may the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of thy Christ, thy truth illuminating all the minds, even as thy sunshine lights up all the homes on the earth.

XXXVI.

ETERNAL Maker and Master of our souls, we rejoice to trace so much of thy mind in the fair round of thy works, the orderly procession of the seasons and the stars. Still more grateful are we for the dearer revelations of thy character made unto us from age to age by thy chosen servants. We devoutly thank Thee also for the providence which has watched over our race, guiding them from nation to nation, across land and sea, even unto this happy shore and this auspicious period. And now, O God, make us, thy servants, strong and true to do the work laid upon us, that every good we have received from the past may be bettered in our hands, and sacredly preserved for the future. In the Redeemer's name, we implore it.

XXXVII.

O LORD God, Giver of the snow and the sunshine, on whose bounty we exist and in whose mercy alone we can safely put our trust, we pray that in all our ways and through all our days the light of thy law may be the guidance of our minds, and the love of thy Spirit the stay of our hearts. Thus as long as we live may we fulfil all our duties as in thy sight; and, when the hour of death comes, surrender our souls into thy hand without fear. And all the glory shall be to thy name.

XXXVIII.

ALMIGHTY Lord, who overseest and judgest alike the worlds of immensity and the secret motions of our hearts, dominion and praise belong to Thee. Dominion and praise our souls shall ascribe to Thee now and forever. May it please Thee, Heavenly Father, to inspire the servants of thy people to render a faithful service in their various places of trust. Wilt Thou give an ever-increasing efficacy to the working of thy law and the co-operating desires of good men throughout the earth. May evil after evil be overcome and abolished. May the light of every good example be lifted up to guide and redeem, until all mankind are freed by the truth and blessed with the blessedness of obedient faith and love. Rendering eternal adoration to Thee, the only wise and true God, we offer our prayer in the holy discipleship of thy Spirit.

XXXIX.

O THOU who to our minds art the representative of all that is known and of all that is unknown, in the beauty of thy manifestations we worship Thee with grateful honor, in the unfathomable mystery of thine infinitude we worship Thee with speechless awe. O that in all things concerning us we might clearly perceive thy will, and adjust our ways to that supreme standard! O that we might be delivered from wrongs, errors, and vices, and serve Thee with a perfect service! Then should our people be a happy people, and our country shine abroad, an example to all the world. Hear, Lord, our humble supplication, and let thy favor attend us evermore.

XL.

ALL-WISE, All-good, All-powerful Sovereign, our Maker, our Friend, and our Judge, renewedly we bring Thee our homage. We breathe afresh in thy hearing our vows of fidelity to thy commandments. Brood, O Spirit of truth and love, — brood with thine inspiration over the minds and hearts of those whom our country has called to places of trust and power, and make them true to their duties. Lead us all to the unvarying practice of every civil and religious virtue. Cause us to appreciate the privileges set before us in this land of equal liberties, and aid us so to conduct ourselves that our future experience may be as rich in blessing as our past history has been full of promise. And to thy name be all the praise.

XLI.

FATHER and Ruler of all, be pleased to accept our praise and to listen to our supplication. Let not our daily cry unto Thee from this place be an empty ceremony, but, in every one of us, a true service of the soul. Correct our mistakes, O God, and forgive our transgressions, and supply our wants, and lead us forward through the paths of trustful obedience. Bring in the glorious time foretold by thy word, when the institutions of society and the souls of men everywhere shall be so adjusted to the influences of truth and love, that as thy Spirit plays over them the whole experience of the world shall be a music for the angels to hear. Yea, righteous Father, speed the time when all discords shall have passed away, and the long-embattled nations of the earth shall lie down together in peace, and a little child shall lead them, even the child born of thy providence in the manger at Bethlehem, whose benign voice these many centuries has been sounding abroad to harmonize with itself the interests and the passions of humanity.

XLII.

INFINITE God and Father, to whose decrees individuals and nations alike must bow, again, with one voice, we offer Thee our homage and implore thy blessing on our meeting and work. In the enjoyment of our blessings may we never forget that we owe them to Thee. Amidst the responsibilities and cares, the duties and temptations, of life, may we always remember that thine eye is on us. And when trouble and grief come, and death approaches, may the assurance of thy constant goodness, and of the reality of a better world, be our never-failing consolation and support. The same prayer we also breathe for our fellow-countrymen in every part of the land. May we all dwell together in unity of spirit and the bond of peace, striving with brotherly love and patriotic devotion to increase each other's welfare and the common good of the whole.

XLIII.

O INFINITE One, whose breath is the inspiration of all life, and whose sole goodness is the source alike of every personal, domestic, and public blessing, with joyous ardor we press around thy altar to offer Thee our love. Alas that our hearts are not purer in thy sight, our lives not worthier of thine approval! Correct us, forgive us, and be our saving guide. Speed, O God, the cause of freedom and justice, education, morality, and religion in every portion of the world; and hasten forward the time when thy will shall be as completely done on the earth as it is in heaven. We offer this prayer in the name of our necessity, and supplicate a gracious answer for the sake of thy goodness.

XLIV.

LORD of the heavenly hosts, and King of the inhabitants of the earth, from our lowly sphere we aspire to bear a part in the worship paid by those who kneel before thy throne. By self-surrender, by purity and sincere devotion, may we please Thee, and win thine approval on our prayers. Especially in this public place of honor and authority, we would pray for wisdom and consecration from above, that we may perform our duty to our fellow-citizens and our country in the most useful manner. May we never forget that the only true glory of a republic must rise from the virtues of its people. Grant thy blessing, O Lord, on all conditions of men in all parts of the world, and hasten the day when thy will shall be done everywhere without resistance.

XLV.

LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever there was a man to till the ground, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. As for us, children of men, our days are as an handbreadth, and our age is as nothing before Thee. Like the flower of the field, so we flourish: for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. O, in the brief time of our mortal sojourn, grant that we may experience a goodly measure of thy truth and love; grant that we may in a goodly degree improve our privileges, and discharge our duties, and thus make a sound preparation for that change which will usher us into other regions of thine infinite empire, for a higher service and a purer joy, as we trust, in thy more immediate presence.

XLVI.

BEFORE Thee, O God, angels bow and archangels veil their faces. Shall not we, much more, be filled with awe when we approach Thee with penitential supplication? Father, forgive our sins, and supply the wants we are ourselves unable to fulfil. Shed thy benedictions on the people, the rulers, the institutions of this country. Unite us all in a common allegiance and a common good-will, and cause the fruits of the Gospel of Christ to abound in every home and in every heart throughout our borders. Thus may the worth and welfare of thy children truly glorify Thee, the universal Parent.

XLVII.

WE pray, Heavenly Father, for a spirit of faith in Thee, and of reverence and obedience to thy will. Confessing our ignorance and our blameworthiness, we supplicate light and pardon from on high. When we think of thy holiness, of the unfailing love shown in thy providence, we deplore our alienation and insensibility, and beseech Thee to remould our minds into a diviner image. Make the path of duty plain, and give us a sacred energy to walk therein. Guide our deliberations to just and good results. Should we ever refuse to know thy ways, Lord, leave us not in our own, but draw us back to the service in which alone salvation and blessedness are to be found. Commending ourselves, with every interest of our beloved country, and of all mankind, to thy disposal, we ascribe immortal praise to thy name, through Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

XLVIII.

O THOU Supreme Architect of the universe, after whose patterns all things are made, by whose will alone all creatures live, with reverent minds we would trace the order of thy works and co-operate in the fulfilment of thy decrees. To Thee, infinitely holy One, we look for victory over the temptations that assail us. May thy truth and love deliver us from the vices of our imperfect nature, and enable us to do a good work in our day and generation. Speed, O God, the triumph of pure morality and religion over the evils under which the world has sighed so long. Bring in the day when there shall no longer be need of armies or police or legislation, because every man shall have become a perfect law unto himself. We ask it as disciples of thy Spirit.

XLIX.

LORD God, Thou art the Lawgiver above all lawgivers, the Judge of all judges; and we come to Thee to confess our sins, to supplicate forgiveness, to seek thy guidance for ourselves, and thy favor on all that appertains to the welfare of our State and Nation. O God, keep us from errors and help us to the truth. By thine aid may we walk acceptably before Thee all the days of our lives, and after death find acceptance in the heavenly home. Hear our prayer, Almighty Lord, and receive the homage we bring Thee, for thy name's sake.

L.

MAKER of worlds, Sovereign of nations, and Father of souls, before engaging in the business of this place we lift our thoughts in adoration of thy majesty, in confession of our dependence and obligation, and in prayer for thy guidance. We desire that our worship shall be no idle offering of the lips, but a sincere service of the heart. May thy Spirit aid us to this. Let no selfish motives corrupt our public actions, but let an earnest love of justice and of the common welfare of all animate us in everything we do. As those who know that they are responsible to an omniscient Judge, we breathe this petition. Answer us in thy mercy, O Lord, and accept us.

LI.

ONCE more, Eternal Parent of men, assembling here, we join in devotion, seeking to worship Thee, the Infinite Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Thou givest us our life in this world, embedded in mysteries, but filled with blessings, — mysteries which compel our wonder, and blessings which demand our gratitude. O Lord, we acknowledge that all comes from Thee; and we thank Thee. Lead us to cooperate with thy will, and never to resist it. May the charm of thy law supersede its terror in winning our obedience. Teach us, and our countrymen in every part of the Union, to appreciate the privileges of religious and political liberty which are offered so richly for our enjoyment. May the nations of the earth grow in wisdom, virtue, and freedom, in the experience of a pious and happy life, until Thou shalt look down on the busy maze of humanity as Thou didst on the virgin creation, and see that all is very good.

LII.

GOD of the elements, who rulest the storm and the calm, who givest us the snowflake and the sunbeam; God of providence, who presidest over the evolution of history, still bringing good from evil, and distributing blessings on thy creatures; God of the soul, who requirest truth and love in the inward parts, — we offer Thee our grateful tribute of adoration and praise afresh this day. O guide and keep us in thy service! What good is it that we are made in thine image, if we learn not to know and love Thee, our Father, and to become assured of an eternal inheritance in Thee? Teach us thy will, and make us submissive to it; and we will glorify Thee evermore.

LIII.

WE thank Thee, O God, for this beautiful day, — thy smile on thy works. We thank Thee for all the joy of our souls, — a token of thy goodness to thy children. We thank Thee for the social and political prerogatives of this nation, — the rich inheritance from our fathers through thy providence. We thank Thee for the immortal hopes brought to us in the Gospel of Christ, — the signal proofs of thy never-failing mercy. Lord, we desire to show ourselves worthy of these blessings. Humbly confessing our ignorance and weakness, we implore thine assistance. Be pleased, O God, to listen to our cry; deliver us from every wicked way, and lead us in the way everlasting.

LIV.

O THOU boundless Force and Good, boundless Truth and Love, of whose mind the universe is but a single expression, although we are infinitely removed from thy greatness we can think of Thee, obey Thee, aspire towards Thee; and we would do so now. Lord, from thine unapproachable exaltation look down, and bring us into communion with Thee through the fellowship of thy Spirit. May the thought of thy serenity pacify our passions, the thought of thy purity cleanse away our evil, and the thought of thine immortality deliver us from the fear of death. Lead us, O Father, we pray Thee,—lead us through life in the path of duty, and at last receive us into heaven, for thy mercy's sake.

LV.

SO often, O God, as we gather in this chamber of legislation, and join in devotion, may a sacred sense of our duties to Thee, to our country, to our fellow-citizens, and to ourselves, be stirred and deepened within us. Let thine inspiration lift our souls to the height of a solemn and joyous communion with Thee through thy works and thy laws. Let a grateful appreciation of the proud legacy left by our fathers, and lately sealed by the sacrifices and blood of our brethren, quicken every generous sentiment of patriotism. And may we never forget, amidst the privileges and responsibilities of earth, that we are but pilgrims and sojourners here, travelling towards a better country, even a heavenly; for the true Fatherland of Immortals can be nowhere save thy presence, O thou Parent of good. In Christ's name we pray Thee to be our guide and our refuge forevermore.

LVI.

MOST merciful God, we bow before Thee with lowly mind to supplicate thy favor. Indebted to Thee for all things, we kneel and ask Thee to do with us as Thou wilt, and especially to make us the servants of thy will. Guide us in our consultations for the welfare of the State. Multiply and extend everything that is good in our country, lessen and remove whatever is evil. As the springtide and summer fruits are now approaching, so may returning harmony and prosperity spread over all parts of the land, healing and hiding the scars of alienation and war. Everywhere thy kingdom come and thy will be done, in the name of Christ.

LVII.

AUTHOR of this fair and varied world, Searcher of hearts, we would fain make the sincerity of our devotions correspond with thy mercies, which are new every morning and fresh every evening. O that our prayers might be as acceptable in thy sight as thy gifts are precious in ours! We gratefully adore the providence to which we owe alike the blessings transmitted from the past and the hopes nourished by the promises of the future. Help us, in our day, to render services commensurate with our obligations. And when all things below are ended, states and nations passed away, pardoned and perfected may we rejoice in thy presence, irradiated by the smile whose light shall supersede sun and moon forever.

LVIII.

HEAVENLY Father, awed by the thought of thine infinite majesty, abandoning all pride and wilfulness, we devoutly commend ourselves to thy guidance. Be pleased to shed thy benediction on our hearts, to let the hallowing presence of thy love light our homes, and to make the keeping of thy commandments and the enjoying of thy love the glory and the bliss of our people. Be Thou the Ruler of our rulers, the Inspirer of our counsellors, the Moulder of our national institutions and destinies, that this country may become a redeeming example to the rest of the world. Through Christ we offer our prayer, and ascribe eternal honors to thy name.

LIX.

AS we look up to supplicate the Divine blessing on the interests here represented, O Thou to whom we are indebted for all we enjoy, and responsible for all we do, may thy Spirit rest on us, and overrule every shortcoming of ours. May no personal vanities or vices interfere with the comfort of our mutual counsel, or mar the integrity of our legislation. May a disinterested regard for what is just and benign supremely actuate us all. We pray, O God, for thy favor on all the citizens of our country in every portion of the land. May those who in this generation occupy places of authority and trust discharge their duties with such fidelity that their influence may result in an ever-increasing prosperity, purity, and glory, through ages yet to come. And all the praise shall be thine, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

LX.

HONOR and praise, obedience and love, forever, O Lord, from us unto Thee: truth and good, mercy and peace, forever from Thee unto us. Let thy Spirit deepen our feelings of dependence and obligation before Thee, and quicken our desires to serve and please Thee in all we do. Remembering how many generations previous to the present one have been tried in the probations of thy providence, and with what various results, may we seriously heed and profit by their experience. Remembering how many nations before our own have been lifted to the pinnacle of greatness, found wanting, and plunged into hopeless ruin, may we take the solemn warning, and strive to shape all the institutions and usages of this land by the everlasting principles of righteousness. Meet and smile on us in these sacred wishes, Father, and crown us with thy favor.

LXI.

WE thankfully and adoringly acknowledge, celestial King, our absolute indebtedness to Thee. Afresh we recognize the duty of all creatures to worship thy majesty and obey thy decrees. Wilt Thou reveal Thyself to us more fully, and help us to live in closer conformity to thy requirements? We pray Thee to preside over and guide our doings here this day. And on the morrow, when in accordance with ancestral custom, in common with all the people of the State, we keep a day of fasting and prayer, be it our purpose seriously to review our lives, study our personal and public duties in the light of thy law, humble ourselves in penitence over our sins, and aspire towards a better future. Saviour of our fathers, we breathe this prayer in the same faith which animated them, like them commending ourselves to thy merciful care, and saying after them, *God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!*

LXII.

WE direct our prayer unto Thee, Lord of every heart and Governor of all nations, trusting that in thy mercy Thou wilt hear and answer us. By a reverential communion with Thee, may we partake more largely of thine attributes, and thus be freed from our vices and raised above our frailties. Especially in all public relations may we see our duty with single eye, and fulfil it with consecrated mind. O bless our State both in its secular and its sacred interests. Guard our Union of States with all the hopes intrusted to it for other lands and future ages. Compass our country with thy favor as with a shield, from generation to generation. And boundless praise shall be offered Thee, O God, forever, in the name of Christ.

LXIII.

O LORD, every morning anew Thou unsealest our eyes from slumber and unveilest thy world from darkness. Every evening Thou droppest the curtain of stars and stillness over the earth, and thy banner above thy children is love while they sleep. Therefore at morn and even will we worship Thee anew, O God, folding our hands to nightly repose in thy care, opening our eyes and going forth to daily work under thy guidance. Keep us this day without sin. Every day help us to offer Thee a pleasing service in our various places of duty. And when all our days and nights below shall end, welcome us to the eternal day of thy presence, where there shall be no more night. Grant these petitions for the sake of thine infinite love, and we will adore Thee forever.

LXIV.

O THOU, who art the sole Maker and Ruler of all that is, to Thee we owe our being, to Thee we are constantly indebted for every blessing. How can we fail to honor and love Thee in the very depths of our souls, without the most shameful ingratitude? Ah, let thy grace withhold us from such apostasy, and draw us with fresh sincerity of devotedness to the fulfilment of every obligation. With contrite hearts, O Lord, we confess our transgressions before Thee, and beseech thy forgiving benediction for ourselves, for our country, and for all mankind.

LXV.

GOD of all that ever was, or is, or shall be, Cause and Director of all changes though in Thyself knowing no change throughout eternity, as thine intelligent and responsible children we worship Thee and seek to conform every purpose of our hearts to thine ordinances. Thou revealest the laws of thy power, wisdom, and goodness alike in the crystal flakes of snow, the orbits of the stars, the beauty of the earth's fruits, the unfoldings of history, and the prophetic aspirations of conscience. May we diligently study these things, the more clearly to understand our duty and the better to fulfil it. We pray for grace to set such examples in our several spheres as shall lead others to truth and virtue, and so tend to redeem the world.

LXVI.

INFINITE Spirit of truth and love, who art pleased to reveal something of the wisdom of thy mind in the order of thy works, something of the benignity of thine affection in the tenderness of thy ways, and something of the unvarying justice of thy rule in the sure rewards of obedience and the inevitable penalties of broken law, we kneel before Thee with fresh ascriptions of praise and adoration. May thy Spirit guide us to study the indications of thy purposes through all things around and within us, and ever to conform our preferences to thine. Enable us by our characters and conduct to honor the State we represent, and to serve the country whose favored citizens we are. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done everywhere in perfection.

LXVII.

EVERLASTING and Almighty God, with reverential trust we submit ourselves to thy disposal, knowing that thy reign is equally the reign of righteousness and goodness, of justice and mercy. We look up to Thee, and implore light in our darkness, guidance in our uncertainty, pardon in our sin, inspiration and immortality in our decay and death. We commend to thy Spirit all the wretched culprits and wanderers of the world; that thy truth may shine into their minds, and redeem them from the error of their ways. We pray for all the afflicted and unhappy ones among the children of men; that thy love may breathe on their hearts and make them bloom again with hope and joy. And always recognizing the source of our deliverance, O Giver of every good gift, may we all sincerely worship Thee forever.

LXVIII.

SOLITARY and boundless Sovereign of the universe, whose law alone, as manifest in the arrangement and design of thy works, is the supreme standard of right, we desire that thy will may be done in every act of our lives, every impulse of our hearts. We humble ourselves in grief over all our deviations from thy commandments. Let thy mercy be sufficient for our need, O Thou whose mercy is infinite. Put it into the minds of those who make our laws to enact nothing but what is just and good. Make the intelligence and virtue of our people such, their loyalty and good-will such, that a spontaneous observance of the conditions of public welfare shall be their joy, every form of vice and misery becoming less and less before the steady growth of good works and a pure faith. So we pray, adoring Thee, in the name of Christ.

LXIX.

INFINITE Source of goodness and beauty, God of light and order, O let thy Spirit move over our hearts and tune them to harmony. Receiving from Thee, ever afresh, the gift of our existence with its inexhaustible hopes, we humbly own our dependence, and desire with filial aspiration and gratitude to keep thy laws, return Thee our thanks, and surrender our fate into thy hands. We praise Thee, O Lord, for the good things in this State, for the rights and privileges so freely enjoyed in this land. That great sum of blessings bequeathed by our fathers, defended and preserved by the counsels of the wise, the sacrifices of the generous, and the blood of the brave, may we transmit it, augmented and improved, to our children's children, until the latest generation. To this end, merciful God, without whose favor we can do nothing well, hear our prayer, and grant us thine aid.

LXX.

FRAMER of our bodies and Father of our spirits, with adoring gratitude and solemn joy we think of Thee as Thou art enthroned in thine inconceivable perfections, eternity itself bringing no change to Thee. We prostrate ourselves in humiliation and shame as we remember all our unworthiness before Thee. O listen to the lowly cry we lift from the dust, and forgive us every trespass. Thanks be unto Thee, Lord, for the goodly measure of justice, liberty, and prosperity enjoyed in this land. Help us worthily to serve the State, each one doing his share to lessen the evils and to enlarge the blessings prevalent among us. To this end accept our homage, and let thy favor compass us as a shield, O Thou unto whom all flesh shall come to perform their vows.

LXXI.

O LORD, with the deepest devotion we can know, we would now bend before thy throne in adoration and entreaty. Glory be to Thee in thine unspeakable greatness, and, still more, glory be to Thee in the never-failing manifestations of thy loving-kindness. The subjects of thy power, and the constant recipients of thy bounty, we offer Thee the only return we can bring, — our sincere gratitude and our earnest desire to do thy will. O forgive our sins, and let thy grace make up for every deficiency in us. We thank Thee for every good institution and usage in our State and Nation, and beseech Thee to smile on them and perfect them, removing everything Thou seest amiss among us. And in the years to come, as this country is signalized by special social and political privileges, so may we be distinguished among all the nations of the earth as a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and devoted to thy glory.

LXXII.

WHAT are we, great Lord of all, that we should presume to address Thee, the Infinite God? Ah, by the gracious revelation of thy Spirit we know that we are thine offspring, the objects of thy love and pity. May this blessed and sublime assurance arm us for every temptation, strengthen us for every task, comfort us in every sorrow, and be our stay in the last solemn hour. Eternal One! when we reflect before Thee on the long line of nations which in their time have passed across the earth and vanished, destroyed by their vices, with fervent solicitude we pray for our own country, that she may take warning from the dread example, and observe the laws of righteousness and piety; and thus perpetuate her blessings in growing purity as long as the sun and moon shall endure. Answer our prayer with thy favor, O Lord, which we ask for thy mercy's sake in Jesus Christ.

LXXIII.

ALMIGHTY God, with one accord we bow before Thee, to own thine absolute sovereignty, and to pray that we may blend and perfect our wills in the sole fulfilment of thine. With humble minds we confess our ignorance and frailty; with grief and shame, our folly and sin. Depending on thy goodness, encouraged by thy promises, we look up and implore thy pardon for our errors in the past, thy gracious guidance for our conduct in the future. We acknowledge thy constant benignity to us and to our country, and pray that we may have grace to show our gratitude by obedience as well as by praise. Asking these things through thy mercy, we would ascribe unfailing honor to thy name evermore.

LXXIV.

INFINITE Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, we gratefully acknowledge the gift of this beautiful day, so full of light and peace and manifold blessings. While its golden hours, crowned with all the budding promise of the spring, float by, may we honor and serve Thee with a pure service. We thank Thee for the glorious heritage of our native land, spread out between the oceans, under the sky, in all its varied magnificence and bountifulness, the proudest mansion and the humblest hut embraced by equal laws and open to common privileges. May we show our appreciation of the boon by the moral and religious fidelity of our conduct in every public and every private relation. We ask it in the name of Christ, the Saviour, ascribing eternal homage to Thee.

LXXV.

ALL-CONTAINING and everlasting God, thy love has called us into being. Thy wisdom and power have built around us this fair order of nature, with its succession of welcome seasons. Thy providence has given us the alternation of day and night, with its busy cares and its sweet repose. Thy justice has established obligations which can never be broken with impunity. And, beyond this present scene, there is another world which shall explain all mysteries and rectify all wrongs. O Father, with our deepest wonder and love we praise Thee. In every exigency of duty or distress, wilt Thou give us light and strength from above, and help us to adore Thee with obedient lives as well as with worshipful lips. Let thy Spirit animate us to diligence and faithfulness, and finally bring us all to thine abode.

LXXVI.

COMMUNING with Thee, O Lord, through the order of thy works and through the benignity of thy ways, we gratefully feel our privileges as children of the Most High, kings of the world that now is, and heirs of the world to come. We adore Thee for the fair creation in which we live, the handiwork of thy fingers, and for the immeasurable blessings, the gifts of thy love, which we enjoy. We thank Thee for the services, examples, and memories of all the great and good men who have lived before us. Aid us by thy Spirit, O God, so to train our souls by the principles of truth and virtue, that, as we live from year to year, we may find nature constantly growing lovelier to us, our fellow-men dearer, our duties more sacred, our country a more blessed scene of excellence and prosperity, the hope of immortality stronger, and the approbation of our consciences more clear and full.

LXXVII.

SOVEREIGN Majesty, whose are the power and love of all things, in the universal worship rising to thy throne we too would bear our humble part, and, taking thy name on our lips, lay a tribute of adoration upon thine altar. As we struggle here below, amidst temptations and burdens, may thy Spirit often descend into our bosoms, to free us for a little time from the bondage of care and the weariness of passing vanities. Let a thought of thine infinity enlarge the scope of our souls, and a sense of thy repose flow in unutterable peace over the turmoil of our passions. Assist us, Heavenly Father, at all times so to rule and bear ourselves that we may enjoy thine approval while we journey through life, and secure thy welcome when we reach the goal after death. In the name and way which Thou hast appointed, we offer our prayer.

LXXVIII.

O GOD, Author of the universe, Overseer of our souls, Judge to whom we are all accountable forever, we adore Thee in thy perfection, we thank Thee for thy bounty, we implore mercy at thy hands for all our shortcomings. Aid us, Infinite Wisdom, in our capacity here as representatives of the public authority and welfare, to discharge our duties with discretion, promptitude, and purity. Smile on all the institutions of learning, science, and art in our State, dedicated to the increase of mental culture, moral refinement, and the highest improvement of the people. Raise up friends and benefactions to advance them to their fullest perfection and the greatest abundance of good fruits. Thus may our State grow constantly better and happier, and thy name have the glory.

LXXIX.

O THOU Infinite Mystery, from whom this universal frame of things has proceeded, and on whose unfailing bounty all creatures live, as we meditate on thine attributes we are lost in incapable wonder, and can only adore Thee with speechless awe and trust. Above all things else that we desire, O God, we would that we might know thy will, and do it, have thine approbation, and enjoy it. O, reveal our duties clearly to us, and give us, at the same time, a sufficient inclination to perform them. As citizens of this great and free country, so signally favored by thy providence in its past history, we earnestly pray that our rulers may be good men wisely following the counsels of thy Spirit, and that our fellow-countrymen, with one accord, wherever the Constitution and flag extend, may obey the laws and set an example of fidelity and prosperity that shall be a powerful influence to liberate and redeem the earth. In the name of Christ, graciously hear our prayer, and grant us thy blessing.

LXXX.

ANCIENT of days, and Lord of all destinies, who, without variableness or the shadow of a turning, lookest from thy still eternity on the rise and fall of nations, the appearance and disappearance of worlds, how can we, the frail creatures of change and decay, whose life is but a breath, and whose days are but a span, — how can we worthily adore and serve Thee? Ah, let thy Spirit teach us how. Let thy love guide us. Let thy love purify and bless us. The same prayer which we breathe for ourselves we would breathe for our fellow-citizens and for all men, in the name of Christ, through whom we offer Thee eternal honors.

LXXXI.

ALMIGHTY God, whom no man can ever comprehend, yet whom no man can ever escape, Thou hast beset us behind and before in hallowed memories and divine hopes, and laid thine hand upon us in the admonitions of conscience. Glory be to Thee for the evening shade in which we lie down to sleep, and for the morning light in which we rise up and go forth to our work. We worship Thee, O Lord, for thine attributes, and we thank Thee anew for thy benefits. Let thy blessing rest on our consultations here. Overrule unto good all that we do. Perfect our State and our nation, in the justice of its institutions, the wisdom of its officers, the virtues of its people, and the glory that shall shine over its borders. We offer our prayer in the manner of thine appointment, and ascribe to thy name praise without end.

LXXXII.

GOD of all creatures, amid the uncertainty and turmoil of our days below, may we have peace of mind, resting in the serene assurance that, since all things are in thy power, nothing can go hopelessly amiss. There must be payment for every pang, rectification for every wrong. Help us, in our mutual dealings, to imitate the forbearing kindness shown by thy Providence, which still, with open arms, invites the remotest prodigal to return. Soften, O Lord, and remove the local prejudices and partisan passions which exasperate and divide our people. Increase the lofty patriotism, the consecration to liberty and humanity, which should unite all generous souls in one common bond of duty and joy. Grant unto our country an era of peace and unity never to end, in which we shall display a private friendliness and a public devotion as unlimited as our blessings.

LXXXIII.

SUPREME Ruler in heaven and earth, we humbly acknowledge our dependence. We sorrowfully confess our deficiencies. We gratefully adore thy sovereignty, and aspire to partake of thy perfections. As public representatives of the State, we pray that Thou wilt give us wisdom and fidelity. We pray that all good institutions among us may flourish, and bring forth fruits more abundantly; and that the time may soon come when Thou shalt look down with entire approbation on all within the limits of our beloved country. We ask it in the name of Christ, through whom be praises unto Thee without end.

LXXXIV.

LORD, as we come together again in this place, we would devoutly join to supplicate thy favor. May thy majesty be worshipped by every heart, and thy law be enthroned in every will. O let thy Spirit cleanse and sanctify our consciences, and guide all our deliberations purely to the end of the public honor and welfare. Gracious God, we thank Thee for the unspeakable worth of the heritage secured to the coming generations of humanity in this free and happy land of the West. From the depths of our hearts we pray that the liberality and benignity of American institutions may inspire American citizens to show by the generosity of their characters and the holiness of their lives that they are *worthy* to enjoy advantages and set an example in lead of the rest of the world. Kindly heed our petition, Infinite One, and accept the adoration we bring Thee.

LXXXV.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Friend of our fathers in all ages, protector of our brethren in all places, in thy Spirit there is one fellowship of the faithful everywhere and forever. Teach us to know that we are thine whether we live or die, and thus to feel no fear either before the perils of life or before the mystery of death. Smile on the leaders and rulers of our land. Cause them all to be animated by noble motives alone, and enable them in their day and generation to render good service to the permanent interests of men. May the laws enacted and the customs observed among us be ever better and better adjusted to thy will, so as to tend more purely to increase the happiness of the people and secure the unfailing glory of our country.

LXXXVI.

AUTHOR of everything that is, without thy will no event can take place, and except in unison with thy will never can a created soul find rest. Whatever be our lot and care, therefore, whether we toil in secrecy or in the open council-chambers of the nation, we would turn to Thee for help and light and justification. Who, O Lord, ever resisted Thee, and knew peace? Who ever truly surrendered to Thee, and knew it not? May the beautiful order which reigns throughout the realms of nature be reflected and completed in the realm of humanity, the truths and virtues of morality and religion overcoming all obstacles to the universal righteousness and happiness of men. Pour thy light through every guilty corner in our breasts, and illuminate every refuge of lies, that we may be brought into clearness with ourselves and into harmony with Thee. We humbly ask it through thy Spirit.

LXXXVII.

GOD of perfect holiness, how can we ever stand before Thee, except in penitential shame? What ingratitude is ours, if we do not worship Thee and aspire to Thee with the deepest sincerity of our souls, bringing the holiest fires of our hearts to burn upon thine altar! Governor and Judge of all nations, bless our country. Grant us an increase of knowledge, virtue, and devotion. Give us a peace and prosperity which shall endure forever, because based on the keeping of thy commandments.

Since we were last here, Lord, thy providence has removed one of our number from this world. We pray that his death may be sanctified to his family, to his friends, and to his associates in public life. We would be still a moment and know that Thou art God. May we heed the voice which speaks in such solemn tones above the frailties of our nature and the stormy passions of the world, saying, Be ye also ready: for the summons may come to any of you in an hour when ye think not.

LXXXVIII.

GOD of nature, Father of humanity, hear our prayer. Let thy Spirit purify us and teach us how to pray aright. Help us, O Lord, to outgrow every error and vice. Make thy truth illumine all our minds, as thy sunshine lights all our homes. May our legislation be based on justice and perfected in love, and prove a means of lasting good. We commend the destinies of these United States to thy special keeping; and that all men may learn to do thy will on earth as the angels do it in heaven, shall ever be our petition.

LXXXIX.

INFINITE Spirit of truth and love, listen to our prayer. Come and take possession of our souls. Teach us always clearly to know what our duty is, and give us the spirit to fulfil it. Free us from all petty passions and ignoble habits. Fill us with the love of truth, the love of our country, the love of humanity, and, above all, with the love of Thee, O our God! As we remember the wrongs and sorrows of men in all ages, the disinterested sacrifices and sufferings of the noblest members of our race for the redemption of the rest, may the hardness of our hearts melt, and a regenerating affection fall on us from above. Rebuke, we pray Thee, and overthrow every corrupt and despotic ruler, and send the gladdening light of thy love through all the lowly places of the world.

XC.

GOD of the morning light and the evening shade, giver of sunshine and rain, we would learn through thy works to recognize thy power and benignity, and to walk in filial fellowship with thy Spirit. If Thou wert strict to mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand? But there is mercy with Thee, that Thou mayest be trusted as well as revered. May both the awe of thy justice and the love of thy goodness lead us to fulfil all our duties before Thee with a sacred fidelity. We pray for all the towns and villages of this Commonwealth, — the scattered communities nestling among the hills and valleys of Massachusetts, in the enjoyment of privileges so rich and peaceful. Everywhere may the benediction of thine attributes brood, and the incense of the gratitude of thy children rise. And wilt Thou, by thy providence, perpetuate the manifold political and social blessings among us, even to the last generation of time.

XCI.

O GOD, who suffusest the universe with thy glory, and wipest the tears of mourners by thy grace, we have not known Thee, have not served and loved Thee as we ought to have done. How magnificent is thy providence over the worlds of space! How tender and soothing is thy presence to the children of men! We pray that Thou wilt reveal thyself to us in thine unspeakable perfections, till everything else grows dim and insignificant in comparison with Thee. We think of Thee as the boundless divinity whose will is law, whose word is truth, whose name is love. O purify our hearts, enlighten our minds, and elevate us into such conformity with Thee that we may perceive all life to be the breath of thy Spirit, all joy the token of thy benevolence, all beauty the reflection of thy happiness, all aspiration the attraction of thy purposes. Then shall nature be to us but one revelation of Thee, the world itself a temple, and our whole experience a living religion.

XCII.

AGAIN, Lord and Father Almighty, as we gather to our consultation and labor here, we present ourselves before Thee to invoke and supplicate thy benediction. The heavens and the earth are full of thy glory, and every creature must acknowledge thy mercies. O lift our spirits to the height of thy fellowship, and bless them with the peacefulness of thy pure service. Hear our prayer in behalf of the interests of our country. Let thy Spirit brood in protecting love over every part of the land. Make the American people a people signalized among the nations of the earth alike by their piety, their virtue, their prosperity, and their happiness. And may all the children of men be led by thy providence through a constant improvement in the excellence of their worth and joy unto the end of time.

XCIII.

HEAVENLY Father, we devoutly thank Thee for the beauty and the blessedness of this day. Give us, O God, spirits to enjoy thy glorious works, piously to keep thy commandments, and evermore to worship the Giver of all. Grateful for the priceless privileges of our homes, we pray that our personal purity and integrity may make them homes of truth, love, and peace. When we think of the nations of old, ravaged by incessant wars, groaning under relentless taskmasters, crushed by insufferable burdens of oppression, ignorance, and vice, and then contemplate the matchless blessings diffused among our countrymen, an incense of thankful adoration rises from our hearts, and we lay on thine altar, O Lord, the vow to be faithful to every public duty. Listen to our prayer, Father: guide us while we live, and take us when we die; but let not our country ever die, or the honor and welfare of our children come to an end.

XCIV.

ETERNAL Parent of men, benign Maker of the world, on such a day as this, filled with the splendor of promise and clothed with the beauty of opening summer, as we wander under the blue skies, among the waving trees, we are no true children of thy Spirit if our hearts do not overflow with gratitude and love. Remove from us all which would mar the fulness of our joy and of our harmony with thy works. Free us also from every selfish passion and vice which would alienate us from our fellow-countrymen, or keep us from the full appreciation and enjoyment of the privileges of American citizenship. What a nation, Lord, thy providence has given us, how blessed in its situation and lot, girdled by the continental mountains, sheltered between the oceans, crowded with inexhaustible material riches, and crowned with unmatched political blessings. Help us to appreciate it. Make us worthy of it and faithful to it. And ordain, we supplicate Thee, its perpetual duration.

XCV.

O THOU Infinite God, in whom and by whom alone we live, we aspire to know something more of Thee, as Thou knowest everything of us. Open our intelligence to thy light, and subdue our affections to thy love. Let the charms of thy service prevent its burdens, the loyalty of our consciences making thy yoke light and sweet to bear. In addition to thine other gifts, O Lord, we implore Thee to give thyself now to our faith, and through the deep purification of our hearts enable us to see Thee, in experimental fulfilment of the promise divinely made of old, and divinely renewed every moment, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Almighty Ruler, hold thy shield over our country in storm and sun, that every evil thing among us may wither away, and every good thing grow to perfection. We ask it in the discipleship of him who hath taught the world to say, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come."

XCVI.

INSCRUTABLE Sovereign, ever-present Father, who hast promised to forgive the penitent and to bestow every requisite gift on those who ask, O condescend to our cry. Pardon our offences, save us from evil, and help us according to our needs in every exigency of life and death. From all superstition and infidelity, from all uncharitableness and sloth, from all narrow prejudices or cruel hates, good Lord, deliver us. Give us pity for the sins chargeable on our fellows, penitence for those we have ourselves committed. Give us sympathy to share the griefs of others, fortitude to bear our own. We beseech Thee to bless the public representatives and servants here before Thee. Cleanse them from every fault which would mar their service, and endow them abundantly with every virtue needed for the best completion of the work assigned them. And grant, O thou Ruler of all the earth, that the interests of this dear country of our hearts may flourish as long as the skies shall bend above its mountains and its rivers run to the sea.

XCVII.

GOD of righteousness and mercy, every blessed gift comes from Thee. We owe ourselves to Thee. Knowing our manifold incompetency, we implore the power of thy Spirit to make us pure, to guide us aright, to animate us under our tasks, and finally to save us all. We cannot meet in this chamber of legislation, amid such proofs of open weal, without emotions of patriotic pride and grateful piety. Long may thy smile rest on us and the generations which shall come after us. Enjoying a freedom and comfort such as other countries have sighed for but perished without beholding, may the citizens of Massachusetts, all the citizens of the Union, stand fast in their liberty, and strive to improve in everything good. O God, make our people trust, obey, and aspire; and teach our rulers that true statesmanship, — the art of converting what is into what ought to be. Lead us in the paths of duty and peace, and where we prove defective let thy grace be our sufficiency.

XCVIII.

ONCE more, O our Father, as we ascend to these seats of law and counsel, we would purify ourselves by meditation and prayer for the duties before us. In this capitol, dedicated to the interests of the State, we desire to rise out of all personal prejudices, and to weigh every measure, as in thy sight, with impartial conscience. From blindness of mind and hardness of heart, from every perverse bias or self-conceit, Almighty God, set us free, and set the whole body of our fellow-citizens free. Make the local animosities which have sometimes placed different parts of the land in opposition sleep henceforth as deeply as the bosoms of the martyred dead whose blood has vindicated the common nationality. While heaven shall spread its blue tent over our country, may no occasion again cause us to pitch our white ones in warlike array beneath it. O be Thou in a special sense the God of this American people, making thy law their delight, and thy love their refuge.

XCIX.

ETERNAL Creator and universal Parent, who every night infoldest thy children in slumber, and every day givest them their daily bread, we no sooner look up in worship of thy perfections than we are forced to look down in shame for our faults. Make us more like Thyself. Help us to pass, pure and calm, through a corrupt and angry world. Cause thy wisdom to overrule our folly, thy mercy to vanquish our sins, every true interest of the State perpetually to flourish. May our institutions of art, education, charity, and religion be so many public fountains, set in the sunlight of popular liberty and aspiration, pouring streams of pure refreshment abroad, and making their votaries the ornaments of the land. When we shall have vanished from earthly scenes, may our country stay in growing beauty and worth; and still, from age to age, be better served by better men. As long as the seasons shall alternate in our sky, and new generations of citizens succeed in our homes, may thy will meet less and less obstruc-

tion from the vices of men, and the many kingdoms below more and more clearly mirror the one kingdom above.

And now, Lord, that our deliberations here draw to a close, we pray for thy servants, that as they separate and return to their homes scattered far and wide over the Commonwealth, they may carry with them kindly recollections of each other, and the satisfaction of knowing that, whatever errors they may have committed, they have meant to serve the best interests of their fellow-citizens, with no mixture of private malice or any corrupt purpose. We ask it in the name of Christ.

C.

O LORD, peaceful and lovely is the earth this summer day. As Thou liftest up the gates of the morning, and throwest open the everlasting doors of the world, and comest in, O thou King of Glory, let every heart exhale an incense of gratitude, and every tongue cry, "How beautiful are thy works, how merciful are thy ways." Before the awful infinitude of thine attributes, O God, we know that we are but as passing specks of nothingness. Yet our hearts shall not fail us, but we will look up with trust, remembering that the smallest things must still be dear to him who made them.

We invoke Thee, almighty Sovereign, to smile on thy servants assembled here, and to endue them with every needed gift. Bless the precious homes from which they come, the varied communities they represent, the State whose children they are. May our great Union of States become ever fuller of happy citizens, abounding in domestic joys, friendly offices, public glories,

and divine hopes, until the sun and moon shall be no more.

For the last time in this place, Heavenly Father, we now bow together before Thee. Thanks for the kindly ties that have been knit and shall not be broken. For, though we part from each other, we part never from Thee, and in Thee all things commune. If we never meet again in person, may we often meet again in pleasant remembrance, and, finally, once, in heaven. *Amen.*

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